

CRYSTAL PALACE

Roy Hodgson
Attacking combinations

SET-UP

AREA

Up to full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, bibs, cones, 4 mannequins, 2 full size goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 19 players + 2 goalkeepers

SESSION TIME

Patterns of play: 40mins

Around and around: 40mins

Overview

This training session is all about developing patterns of attacking play and movement that will create space in wide areas and goal scoring opportunities in and around the penalty box.

The opening practice allows for a continuous rehearsal of player movements, while the subsequent small-sided game offers overload situations in both central and wide areas, and allows for chances to be created in the final third.

We use both of these practices

on a regular basis at Crystal Palace, running them, or variations on them, at least once or twice a week.

What do I get the players to do?

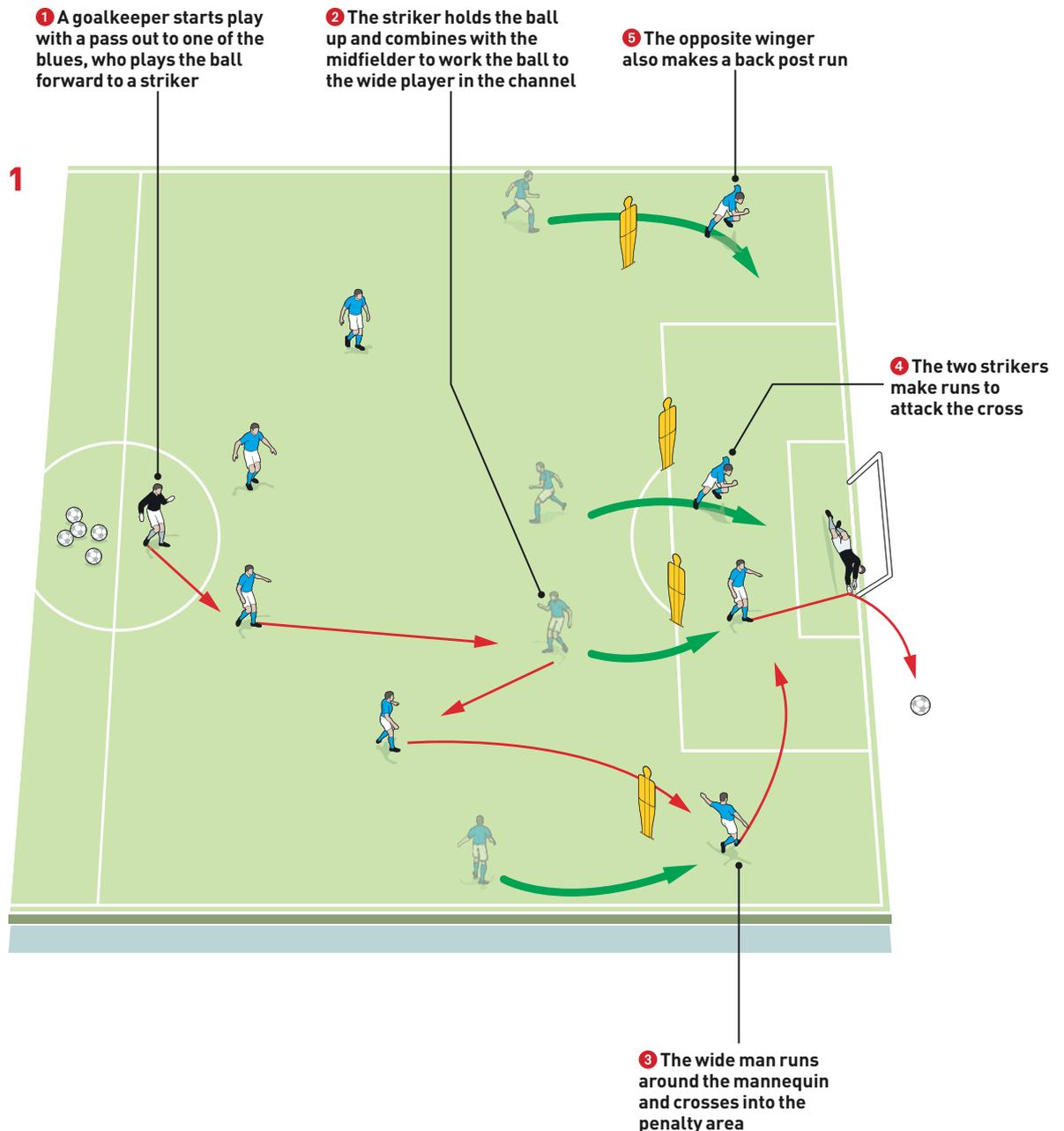
Patterns of play

We set up on half a pitch with a goal and a goalkeeper in their normal position at one end and another goalkeeper to start play at the other end. Four mannequins represent defenders and are positioned as a back four, as shown [1].

We're using eight outfield

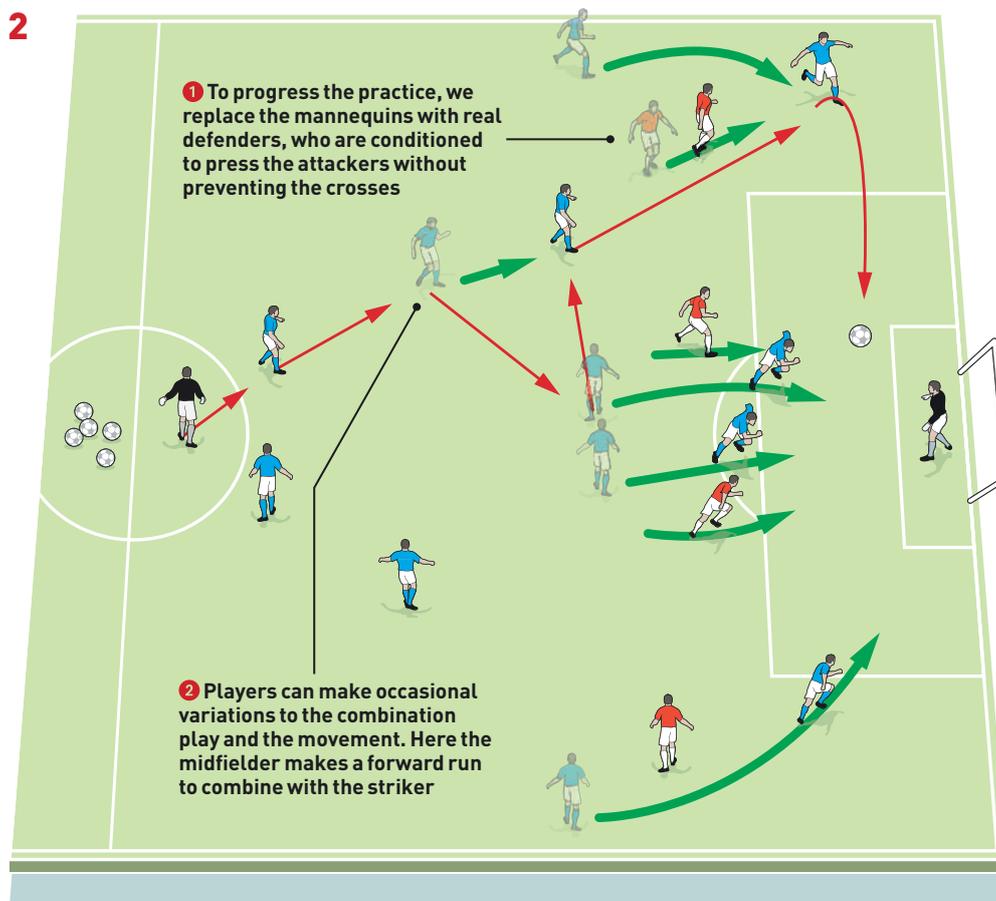
KEY

- Ball movement
- Player movement
- Dribble



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players who combine unopposed to get the ball out wide, creating space in the box that can be exploited by the forwards. The wide player crosses into the penalty area, where the two strikers and the opposite winger are making runs to attack the cross. After each attack, players should reset and run the drill again. We alternate the side of attack so all the players get tested. We can run variations of this pattern of play.

How do I progress the session?

The previous practice can easily be made more realistic by replacing the

mannequins with actual defenders, though these may need to be conditioned in the coach’s favour to ensure that the crosses reach the strikers.

In the diagram, we have replaced the mannequins with four defenders, as shown [2]. These defenders pressure the attackers without preventing the cross. Here we are running the same passing combinations on the left flank but have given the players the freedom to make occasional variations.

We run the initial set-up followed by the progression for up to 40 minutes,

depending on how many different patterns of play we need to cover.

What do I get the players to do next? Around and around

Using the full width of the pitch, we set up between the two 18-yard lines. We have a goal and a goalkeeper at each end. We mark out a 15-yard penalty area in front of each goal and a 10-yard unopposed wide zone on each wing of the pitch. We’re using 19 outfield players, split into two team of eight and three neutrals. The neutrals play for the team in possession – one

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is a floating midfielder to give the possession team an overload in the centre of the pitch, while the other two are wingers who create overloads in the unopposed wide zones. Play starts and restarts with a pass out from the goalkeeper. We expect players to recreate the passing moves from the first part of the session, with the aim of combining to get the ball into the unopposed wide channels for a cross, as shown [3]. While this is obviously helped by the presence of the floating midfielder

and the neutral wingers, play is also dictated by the positions taken by the opposition.

We play for up to 40 minutes but are flexible with timings due to the heavy workload of the attacking players.

What are the key things to look out for?

We are looking for players to use high quality passing and crossing, and efficient finishing. Tactically we want to see players executing well timed movements to get in behind

opponents and to create the space needed in the box to score goals.

What are the typical mistakes that player might make, and how do I avoid them?

Typically players can make poorly timed movements. Attackers can also fail to get across the blocking defenders to meet crosses, and they can take too long to get shots away or fail to follow up on rebounds. Use coaching breaks in the session to pick up on these points when they arise.

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